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ABSTRACT

This document provides an overview of service learning (SL) and shows how teachers can incorporate SL into elementary, middle, and high school curricula. First, SL is differentiated from community service and volunteerism. The four basic elements of SL (preparation, service, reflection, and celebration) are explained along with strategies for incorporating them into curricula and the benefits and drawbacks of various types of SL activities (direct and indirect service and civic action). The role of SL advisory committees and categories from which committee representatives are generally selected are examined. Discussed next are the importance of effective communication to the success of SL programs and considerations in and ways of monitoring/evaluating SL programs. The following benefits of SL are described: adult models for young people, student self-direction, parent involvement, improved workplace relationships, school-community partnerships, and altered perceptions of youth. Outlined next are approaches to infusing SL into elementary, middle, and high school curricula based on the following: community service classes, mandatory services, collaboration with community-based organizations, targeted populations, club-linked service, career/vocational education courses, in-school service, special events, and summer service. Concluding the document is a list of 25 organizations providing information related to SL. (MN)

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Service Learning for All Students

Carl I. Fertman

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Service Learning for All Students

by
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The chapter sponsors this fastback in honor of Dr. A. Glenn "Woody" Clark, a past international president of Phi Delta Kappa. Clark has held numerous leadership positions in the local chapter during his 51 years of service to PDK, and he continues to be active today.

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Introduction

We are witnessing a transformation in education. Again and again we hear that we are in times of diversification, collaboration, systemic change, and transition. Although these terms apply to cooperative efforts between groups, they stem from the realization that such efforts can efficiently support and prepare students to face increasingly complex challenges, opportunities, and problems. Service learning is a part of this transformation.

Service learning rightly has been called the education of empowerment. It builds self-esteem, renews curiosity about learning, develops interpersonal skills, stirs leadership development, rekindles work and service ethics, and brings the world of careers closer to home. All students – elementary, middle, and high school, as well as special education – benefit from service learning.

This fastback provides an overview of service learning and shows how teachers can incorporate service learning as an instructional methodology.

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Definition of Service Learning

Service learning involves students in real-life settings where they apply academic knowledge and previous experience to meet real community needs.

As an instructional methodology, service learning is appropriate for use with all students and in all curricular areas. Ideally, it is infused into the curriculum (rather than being an add-on program), is offered for academic credit, and involves participants from the school, community, student body, and families.

Service learning:

- Links service and academic learning.
- Provides concrete opportunities for young people to learn new skills, think critically, and test new roles in an environment that encourages risk-taking and rewards competence.
- Encourages students to perform service that makes a contribution to the community. (In this context, the school also may be defined as the community.)
- Constitutes an integral element in the life of a school and its community.
- Involves preparation for, reflection on, and celebration of service as essential elements.
- Involves youthful participants in planning from the earliest stages.

Although the terms are sometimes used interchangeably, *service learning*, *community service*, and *volunteerism* are not synonymous. Community service and volunteerism may be, and often are, powerful experiences for young people, but community service and volunteerism only become service learning when there is a deliberate connection between service and learning opportunities and when that integration is accompanied by thoughtfully designed occasions to reflect on the service experience. Most schools have a long tradition of community service and volunteer activities, such as food and toy drives, fund raisers, special events, and disaster relief. Service learning builds on and expands these activities by linking them to learning.

The roots of service learning can be traced to John Dewey, experiential education, and citizenship education. Dewey believed that young people want to explore and gain control over their environment. According to Dewey, in exploring their world, learners encounter social problems. These encounters lead youth to solve problems and to use their collected knowledge.

Experiential education places emphasis on learning through interaction with the environment and the effective use of experience as an integral part of education in order to empower learners and promote the common good. Processing, a pivotal step in experiential learning, is the foundation for the service learning concept of reflection.

Citizenship education encourages the development of values consistent with democratic living and, likewise, values young people as active participants in a democratic society. Community service and volunteerism are elements of citizenship education.

Recent findings show that students learn best when they apply their knowledge by observing and working with experts while performing real tasks, and this underlines the importance of the service learning focus on real-life contexts. In the process of applying knowledge, it becomes more valuable and interesting. Students grow in their un-

derstanding of how their skills and knowledge may be directly applied to solve problems in the adult world they soon will enter.

Service learning can be established in a number of ways. However, a basic assumption is that the community views the school as a resource, and the school perceives service as part of its educational mission. Service learning thus may involve many different groups of students, teachers, school administrators, parents, community members, business representatives, and so on. Any of these participants can initiate service learning, which does not have to begin with the school. For example, in some communities, volunteer centers have initiated literacy training and recruited students to serve as tutors. Subsequently, schools have collaborated with the centers in this effort.

Four Basic Elements

Service learning as an instructional methodology has four basic elements: preparation, service, reflection, and celebration. Students and adults – teachers, principals, community organization staff, community members, clergy, business leaders, parents – are involved in all four elements.

Preparation focuses on linking service learning activities to specific learning outcomes and preparing the students to perform the activities.

Linking service learning activities to specific learning outcomes occurs in two ways. One way is to start with a particular service focus, or theme, and work toward a specific learning outcome. The other way is to start with a specific learning outcome and work to develop a complementary service activity.

In the first way, a school or classroom service learning theme is established to guide in organizing and shaping the group's activities. The theme helps to focus the efforts of the participants.

Next, specific learning outcomes are developed. For example, if the theme of service learning is helping the homeless, students might learn about homelessness by studying statistics on homelessness and discussing how different societies deal with the problem. Specific content will differ according to the maturity of the students.

The second strategy used to link service activities to specific learning outcomes is to start with a specific learning outcome and develop a complementary service activity. In this instance, the knowledge and

skills associated with the learning outcome are demonstrated through service. Frequently, the same classroom activity that normally would demonstrate mastery of the subject would be completed – but not in the classroom. Rather, students would apply their learning by working in a community setting. Some obvious linkages come to mind: home economics in food banks and shelters; art projects in community settings; health classes in rural ambulance corps; science in community parks and recycling centers.

Both strategies transform teachers from dispensers of information to translators of information for real life.

With service learning, the community can become a teacher's expanded classroom. It is important to keep in mind that service learning is not simply matching students with volunteer activities. By combining curriculum content and volunteer opportunities, service learning provides the teachers the opportunity to construct serious learning from service experiences and provides students the opportunity to reflect on those experiences.

Students must have a clear sense of what is to be accomplished and what is to be learned during each service learning activity. They should know how to perform the actual service work, who will be served, the social contexts related to the service, information about the service site, problems that may arise, and so on. They may participate in group-building exercises before, during, or after the service activities. Furthermore, as part of their preparation, students benefit when they understand how sites are selected, how coordination and supervision will be achieved, the agency's and the school's understanding of each other's expectations and responsibilities, and how students are recruited, trained, supervised, evaluated, and provided with opportunities for reflection.

Many facilitators/teachers set aside several class periods or do after-school or day-long training programs to focus on service skills. Typically these programs include the previous information and allow

students to practice skills and role-play potential situations that might occur during the service activity.

Service itself is the second element. The service must possess two qualities. First, it should be challenging, engaging, and meaningful for the students. Second, it should address a real need, so that students perceive the activity and their participation as relevant and important. Service is enhanced when students play a significant role in designing the experience. The more that students are involved, the greater their sense of ownership and the more of themselves they will invest in the program.

Service learning activities fall into three general categories: direct service, indirect service, and civic action. Direct service is defined by personal contact with individuals in need. Of the three types of service, students often find this type the most rewarding because of the immediate reinforcement they receive. One example of direct service is junior high school students participating in recreational activities with senior citizens, such as hosting a dance in which young and old dance together. Another example is fifth-graders assisting at a community soup kitchen. Whatever the task, it is advantageous for students to be involved over a period of weeks or months in order to develop relationships, to gain a deep understanding of problems, and to feel that they have made a significant, lasting contribution.

Indirect service is easier to organize because it involves channeling resources to solve the problem, rather than direct involvement with the individuals in need. Examples of indirect service include conducting a holiday fund drive for a children's hospital and collecting canned goods for a community food bank.

The disadvantage of indirect service is that students do not make personal contact with those in need; therefore, they do not receive immediate feedback. On the other hand, indirect service often is part of a larger community effort involving many individuals and groups. Sometimes these efforts are highly publicized. Students enjoy the high energy and enthusiasm of such service activities.

Civic action emphasizes active participation in democratic citizenship. It includes two main activities: informing the public about a problem to be addressed and working toward solving the problem. Students may petition the local government for better housing for the homeless, or they may initiate a campaign to increase public awareness of student drug and alcohol abuse. When students feel invested in and committed to a particular cause, they can be effective in bringing about political change.

Variety is important when selecting service activities. Encouraging a mix of activities, with different groups of students working on each, will enhance the students' experience by providing different views of the issues and different ways to apply their knowledge. In-depth learning can occur if students experience all three types of service activities. Often the activities can be organized sequentially. Students are first involved with indirect activities, followed by direct service and civic action. The time and duration of each service activity are moderated according to the learning objectives. For example, students might be involved with an ongoing project, such as a stream restoration, for an entire grading period. Activities also can continue over summer vacation or school holidays.

Shaping the experience for students also involves thinking about the service format: individual or group. Often students will work individually at a site. Students assigned to different sites perform different but related tasks. Sometimes students serve at a variety of sites doing the same individual project or task, for example, an oral history project in which the student visits and interviews older community members. Another example of individual service is students serving on the boards of community organizations. Sometimes a number of students serve at the same site performing individual tasks. Service activities in hospitals typically follow this format.

Group service activities promote team-building and cooperation among participants. House rehabilitation projects, community cleanups, volunteer fire fighters, and recreational projects are frequently

cited as examples in which teams of students work together to provide a needed community service. A powerful factor in a service activity is its environment. Service activities take on additional energy and provide greater learning when they place learners in environments that are physically, culturally, socially, or economically different from their own.

A final factor to consider is sharing the service experience with another group, for example, cooperating with college or religious-group service programs. Some states sponsor service programs for students and others who, in addition to earning a stipend, receive a postservice educational benefit that may be applied to college tuition. With the passage of the National and Community Service Trust Act of 1993, such programs likely will increase in the near future.

Reflection integrates service and learning and distinguishes service learning from volunteerism and community service activities. Reflecting on the service experience helps students understand the meaning and impact of their efforts and links what they have learned with what they have done. Without reflection, students may simply go through the motions of service but remain cognitively unaffected by the experience and left with their personal ignorance and biases reinforced or unexamined.

An operational definition of reflection is the active, persistent, and careful consideration of the service activity: the student's behavior, practices, and accomplishments. Students meditate, muse, contemplate, ponder, deliberate, cogitate, reason, and speculate about their service experiences. Reflection means asking basic questions of oneself: What am I doing and why? What am I learning?

Practicing reflection assists young people to gain a greater sense of themselves. For example, when learners are asked to think about their goals and progress in a service learning activity, they have the opportunity to master self-assessment skills that help them to become more independent learners. They acquire insights that allow them to build on their strengths and to set goals in areas where they need fur-

ther development. Reflection also offers teachers an opportunity to identify the knowledge that students gain through service. Teachers can assist students to develop a portfolio or use other self-assessment strategies.

Many of the outcomes claimed for service learning depend on regular reflection. Although the experience provides a rich source of information and generates thoughts and feelings from which students can learn, the interpretation of this input determines its ultimate impact. Providing a thoughtful context in which students can make enlightened sense of their experiences is the job of reflection. Done well and often, reflection can become a lifelong habit that will contribute to greater self-assessment and critical awareness.

Quality reflection requires several fundamental elements. First, it should be structured to have a clear objective: to link the experience to the desired learning outcome. Second, the method selected should be consistent with the desired learning outcome. For example, directed writing activities based on the service foster directed learning. Journal writing fosters personal growth. Small-group discussions promote group-building. Third, all students should be involved in reflection and helped to link the experience to their lives. One way to make reflection relevant to students is to maximize the number of curriculum connections. The use of academic material to improve service and the application to academic material of lessons learned in field activities should be an interactive process. Finally, reflection should be ongoing throughout service learning, not just at the end of an activity or unit.

Celebration is about sharing across systems and organizations and among individuals involved in service learning. Students celebrate learning and achievement and the acquisition and application of knowledge. They are recognized for their demonstration of learning in real-life situations that address community needs. Students share in large and small ways with their community and their families and peers what has been gained and given through service. The variety and forms of student celebrations are limitless.

Ongoing celebrations recognize incremental learning and service involvement, such as hours of service. Noting service hours on report cards, in school newspapers, in flyers home to parents, and on school and agency bulletin boards listing students' names and service projects are examples of ways to recognize and celebrate student service learning activity.

Culminating events also spotlight the completion of units and projects. Such events recognize the service that the children and adolescents have performed and reinforce the value of youth in society. Examples are presentations about service, a book of essays, pictures, a party, a picnic, or a youth outing. A salient feature of culminating events is their focus on youth as a resource provider. Frequently, children and adolescents are wrongly viewed as passive consumers of services. Celebrations validate youth as proactive contributors to the community and as partners in caring for the community.

Celebration also involves recognition of the community, including the school community, for its initiation and support of service learning. Service learning does not just happen. It is a communitywide effort that reflects the values, spirit, and concerns of a community. Partners in service learning are school teachers, principals, counselors, community-based organization staff, parents, and community members. Recognizing each during a celebration of service learning validates their participation and contributions. For example, in one school district the service learning celebration also is the community's service celebration. In addition to awards and certificates for youth, community members and parents are recognized for their volunteer services. The students' response to the celebration is quite positive. Making the celebration communitywide is perceived as further validation by the students of the value of their service learning.

Another part of service celebrations includes recognizing the achievements and contributions of those who are served. Service is more than doing good or simply helping the needy. Service empowers people to create solutions to problems. It is essential that celebra-

tions recognize what the service recipients have accomplished and contributed. One example is celebrating the participation by young students at an elementary school in designing health promotion services provided by high school students.

Celebration creates and nurtures a culture of caring. It promotes youth who care about others in their community, as well as a community that cares about its youth. Celebration acknowledges students and programs that have made a difference. Celebration highlights the effectiveness of service learning.

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Service Learning Advisory Committees

Service learning is school-community collaboration. It changes the culture of schools and communities and the way schools and communities interact with each other. Service learning advisory committees act as the catalyst for this change.

Key roles of the advisory committee are coordination and advocacy. A service learning advisory committee, composed of concerned representatives of schools, business, industry, and social service agencies, should be aware of the skills and services that are needed and where they should be focused in the community. Thus the committee provides an important link between the school and the service opportunities present in the community.

The advisory committee also must be an advocate for service learning in order to improve and maintain service learning programs that are realistic and closely related to the needs of the community. Many committees include, as part of advocacy, development of broad-based community support and funding. They advocate that all young people provide service and learn from the experience.

An advisory committee should comprise individuals from the community and the school who have specific knowledge of the school or community, or both, and can advise educators and community-based organization staff on service learning. But committee members function only to advise, suggest, and assist, not to establish, administer, or direct policy or practice. Committee members themselves are volunteers.

Being a member of an advisory committee is hard work, which often requires meeting extraordinary demands and pressures. Committee members must juggle their work with children and adolescents with their interactions with parents, teachers, administrators, and community organizations, and with their regular full-time responsibilities. As service learning proliferates, the demands on committee members will increase.

Although in some cases a single teacher, principal, or parent may have a significant impact on service learning in a community, rarely does one person have enough knowledge, time, experience, or energy to do everything that is required to build a strong program. Advisory committees have a distinct advantage over solo efforts; namely, the mutual support that develops among committee members. The synergy that results when people work as a team sustains enthusiasm and support even through difficult times.

Before an advisory committee can be formed, approval and support may be required from the school board and the administration of the involved schools. In this case, the board of education normally approves or appoints the members of the committee. The same is true in many community-based organizations. It also may be the board's role to specify the goals, purposes, functions, and operating rules of the advisory committee. The board may issue a policy statement or charter for the advisory committee and establish methods of selecting and replacing members.

Committee size is an important consideration in establishing an advisory committee and will vary depending on the scope of responsibilities. There is no "best" size. Rather, the optimal size of an advisory committee will depend on the size of the school and community, the service learning program, and the number of groups to be represented. The goal is to have adequate representation from all participating organizations without making the committee unwieldy. Committees of 5 to 20 members are standard. Smaller committees tend to operate more efficiently; however, larger committees can function well if

officers and key subcommittee leaders are incorporated in a core steering committee.

An advisory committee should have at least one representative from each involved organization or group. Committee membership also should reflect the community in terms of sex, race, age, occupation, socioeconomic status, geographic location, and other locally appropriate factors. Following are typical categories from which to include representation:

- human service organizations
- businesses
- parents
- students
- news media
- school administration and school board
- religious leaders
- local government
- community-based organizations
- service clubs
- local education agencies
- colleges
- foundations
- volunteer action centers

Two things should be kept in mind when considering potential committee members: 1) The committee will be providing counsel to schools and community-based organizations; and 2) committee members are in a key position to "sell" service learning to the public. Important personal qualifications for committee members include:

- leadership skills, intelligence, and "vision."
- motivation, interest, and willingness to commit to the program.
- strong character and integrity.
- generosity and altruism; community spirit.

- ability to express values and beliefs while tolerant of those that differ from their own.
- available in terms of time, health, and location.

Students also should serve on the advisory committee as equal members with the same responsibilities and expectations as other members. Ideally, committees should comprise at least 25% students. In many communities the committees are 50% young people. Such involvement promotes and reinforces student work and validates students' ideas.

To be effective, advisory committee members require training and ongoing support. Training focuses on members understanding service learning in the community and school organizations, their responsibilities, and the goals they hope to accomplish. Defined roles and individual tasks and responsibilities should be written down but with the understanding that roles may change with time.

Participating on an advisory committee does not always mean providing direct service or looking for funding. The essential role of the advisory committee is to find ways in which school and community resources can be joined to solve real community problems and to link this to student learning. Often what is needed are in-kind contributions such as technical expertise or access to desired resources and information. Efficient use of existing resources also is important. Committees should be encouraged to look for ways to make the best use of available resources and to avoid overlapping services that waste resources.

The creation of an effective service learning advisory committee is a process. It involves building trust and a sense of cohesion. Service learning advisory committees face some problems about which they can do little. Many problems, however, can be avoided through preparing members for the tasks and conflicts they will confront. Solid training will go a long way toward creating an effective service learning advisory committee.

Communications

Service learning involves collaboration and cooperation among many different groups of people, many of whom may not have previously associated with one another. Thus communication is crucial.

Effective communication starts with a plan. Advisory committees need to determine with whom they want to communicate and what they want to say. Students, parents, school and community agency staff, and beneficiaries of service are a few of the groups with whom regular communication should be established.

For example, in order to generate interest in and enthusiasm for service learning, it is important to update participants as to the various ongoing activities in the program. One effective and often-used method is a newsletter. A newsletter may include such items as current projects, recent accomplishments, kudos, personal stories, details of upcoming events, and future directions. Another benefit of a newsletter is that it documents what participants have accomplished. Newsletters may serve to "advertise" the accomplishments of the service learning program and its positive impact on the community.

Flyers and posters also are an effective way to advertise particular events for the benefit of participants and nonparticipants as well. Newspapers, radio, television – all should be used to the maximum extent. Media coverage conveys a sense of importance to those who are participating in the program as well as to those in the community who are not, but who are either directly or indirectly benefiting from

the program. The more coverage that service learning receives, the greater the enthusiasm and interest that will be generated in the community.

Communication about service learning is the responsibility of everyone involved. A representative advisory committee can promote effective dissemination of information simply because its members communicate with their various constituent groups. The advisory committee ideally should act as the hub of a service learning program, serving as a center for the interchange of information. Some programs also have found it helpful to hold a community open house in order to address questions or concerns that community members may have.

Evaluation

Evaluating service learning should involve the various stakeholders: students, teachers, community members, administrators, community-based organizations, parents, and funding groups. Each group wants and needs something different. The challenge is to anticipate the questions that these stakeholders want answered, ranging from the number of service hours to the impact of the service on school reform.

To answer these questions, some basic information about the service learning project is a good starting point. Such basics include the number of students involved, the number of service hours and related classroom hours, and the types of service. For example, are adolescents involved in tutoring younger children, assisting with a park clean-up, or visiting the elderly?

To answer such questions, a record-keeping system typically is established. Such a system records student hours, activities, locations, benefactors and beneficiaries, learning objectives, and so on. A record-keeping system allows for close scrutiny of activities and identification of strengths and weaknesses in the operation of the program. Following are useful documents for monitoring a service learning program:

- student timecards to record service hours and sites.
- sign-in sheets.
- parent permission forms.

- a master chart showing current service activities.
- a site record of student activity.
- a record of total hours of service provided.

But evaluating service learning involves more than counting hours or beneficiaries. Substantive questions also must asked about its impact on community members, student learning, and school reform. Answering the community-impact questions is best achieved by soliciting information from community members. Depending on the specific service activities, visits to service sites, regular telephone contacts, and written evaluations are useful. Service beneficiaries are a main source of such information, but not the only one. Frequently, individuals not directly involved with the activities indirectly benefit and willingly share this information. For example, site supervisors, community and agency representatives, other students and volunteers, and parents may offer useful insights.

Another measure of impact is the extent of involvement. Recording the number of teachers, community members, and others involved with service learning provides one indicator of the project's acceptance.

How does service learning affect academic achievement and school reform? Do students in service learning know more, get better grades, have fewer behavior problems, graduate from high school at higher rates, and pursue postsecondary education more often than students in programs that do not use service learning? These are the questions people want answered. As part of the regular reflection, time can be allocated to discuss the impact of service learning on students. Students' written work related to the service activities can be kept as part of a portfolio. And individual conferences with students and parents can review students' learning goals and progress.

For most students, academic learning and personal development represent the core of service learning's impact. Service learning provides transforming experiences that serve to empower students, to bring life back into their school days, and to recreate a desire to learn and succeed. Students have fun.

In terms of school reform, the answers are more difficult to obtain. Every school and community-based organization is distinct. All aspects of service learning, communications about service learning, effectiveness of the advisory committee, and implementation of the four key service learning elements – preparation, service, reflection, and celebration – provide information that responds to the question of school reform. Feedback from the key staff involved with service learning provides an additional information source. For example, staff typically report being busier, sometimes more stressed, but also more satisfied and excited by their work in service learning.

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Benefits of Service Learning

Following are some of the benefits that schools have noted in implementing service learning.

Adult models for young people. Students have much to gain from service learning in terms of forming new relationships and experiencing new work in real-world settings with adults. These experiences can foster greater understanding between students and adults, whether the adults are parents, teachers, administrators, or community volunteers. The altruistic collaboration of adults from different sectors of society can serve as a powerful model for students. Service learning can help young people grow from the natural dependence of childhood into mature personal interdependence and engagement in community.

Student self-direction. Service learning demonstrates to students how learning and doing go hand in hand – that what they are learning about can be directly applied to actual service. Because learning begins with behavior, students gain a new sense of self-direction. Service learning empowers youth to become service-oriented citizens and youth leaders.

Parent involvement. Students' parents also gain from a service learning experience. Parents witness their children interacting responsibly and maturely with other students and adults. Service learning taps into the potential of students and challenges them in new ways. The results are often surprising and encouraging to their parents. In addi-

tion, service learning often gives parents the opportunity to get to know teachers and school administrators better, laying the foundation for a better working relationship in monitoring the progress of students. The service learning experience enables parents, students, teachers, and administrators to go beyond their usual roles and to work together as equals toward a common goal, which results in better relationships between all of these groups and leads to cooperative efforts beyond the service learning setting.

Improved workplace relationships. The same skills that lead to service learning also may lead to enhanced working relationships between teachers and administrators. Collaboration skills developed in the context of service learning bring teachers, administrators, and students together in other work contexts and may lead to an enhanced school climate.

School and community partnerships. Service learning can be instrumental in the development of partnerships between the school and the community. It directs schools toward the needs of the larger community, such as homelessness, hunger, poverty, illiteracy, and environmental problems. As students serve the community, the community begins to look to the schools for insight and to solve problems — in essence, for leadership in addressing community needs. As service learning projects evolve, an infrastructure is built for ongoing identification of issues and delivery of services.

The partnerships established through service learning provide dividends not otherwise available. Every community has human needs that can be enhanced through service. In helping to address those needs, the school and district also profit from enhanced public relations with their host community.

Perceptions of youth change. Another outcome of service learning is that adults begin to see youth differently. As adults witness the positive commitment of a sizable group of young people, they come to see the potential that these youth represent. They recognize the significant contribution that youth can make and no longer view youth

as passive dependents, but as committed citizens actively fulfilling their civic responsibilities. They begin to see youth as a valuable, constantly renewable human resource with enormous potential. Furthermore, the school and community organizations are established as a talent base for the community. Within each school and community organization are staff who have the background and knowledge to help solve specific community problems. Service learning encourages new ways of thinking about how communities can use their resources.

Elementary, Middle, and High School Infusion

Frequently service learning is focused on high school students or high-risk youth, which is too narrow a focus and minimizes the full potential of service learning as an instructional methodology. Increasingly, service learning spans elementary, middle, and high school and includes special education.

Many elementary schools select schoolwide service learning themes and projects. Service then becomes the spirit and core of these schools. For example, one elementary school decided to serve the elderly as its focus. As part of the history curriculum, students interviewed older citizens and produced a history of the community. In art the students produced paintings and drawings to decorate the homes of the elderly; in science they grew flowers and gardened for their beneficiaries; in math they helped with shopping. Every student was partnered with a senior citizen for the activities.

Elementary and secondary schools and community-based organizations have developed a variety of approaches to infuse service learning in their schools and communities. The most powerful way to infuse the value of service and to enhance student learning is to integrate a variety of service experiences into the academic curriculum. Social studies may be a natural place to teach civic responsibility, but any content area can be used. Following are brief descriptions of approaches to initiating service learning in schools and communities.

Community Service Class

A community service class is the first step toward infusion taken by many high schools. In the class the teacher makes students aware of various volunteer opportunities. Students, individually and in groups, spend a significant amount of class time in direct service to the community. Prior to participating in any service activities, they receive training. Once on site, they participate in regular, ongoing reflection. Once a year a celebration ceremony recognizes their contributions and achievements.

Mandatory Service

Some schools make service a requirement for graduation. There is currently some debate about the merits of requiring service of all students. Some feel schools should encourage but not require service, and that requiring service is a contradiction in terms. Others argue that service is a fundamental responsibility of all citizens, and that it is every citizen's civic duty to contribute to the community. The U.S. Supreme Court has refused to hear a case involving students who have been trying to abolish mandatory community service in their school, thus upholding a lower court ruling that such a requirement is constitutional. Service requirements vary, as do the methods of incorporating service learning into the schools. Some schools require students to enroll in a service class in addition to spending a certain amount of hours in a service activity, while others require only the time commitment.

Collaboration with a Community-Based Organization

Another approach to introducing service learning is for the school to collaborate with a community-based organization and to organize service activities to meet the needs of that organization. For example, one school partnered with a homeless shelter and organized activities that were suitable for the residents at the shelter. Art classes helped

the residents beautify their community rooms and recreational areas; the technology department helped build toys for the children's play area; the home economics department held sewing and craft seminars; and the music department developed a participatory music program for the residents. Each school department made some contribution to the overall service effort.

As both community-based organizations and schools experience reduced budgets, it is becoming increasingly important that schools collaborate with organizations and groups in their communities. Organizations such as the United Way, Volunteer Action Centers, American Red Cross, and Junior League all have an investment in fostering a service ethic. Businesses also are exploring ways to encourage their employees to serve the community. By bringing these various organizations together, many schools are developing collaboratively funded staff positions. Religious organizations also provide service opportunities that can link to schools. Finally, in communities with volunteer fire fighting and emergency medical services, opportunities to link learning and critical community services can be forged.

Targeted Populations

Another growing approach to service learning is targeting underserved populations, such as the mentally or physically handicapped. One variation is collaboration between targeted populations and mainstream students, working on service projects together. For example, mainstream students might work beside handicapped students on a clean-up project in a local neighborhood. The focus in these activities is inclusion of the targeted population, rather than treating the target population as the recipient of a service.

Similarly, intergenerational service links individuals over the age of 65 with school-age youth. Frequently these programs have a strong learning component and provide the senior citizen with a meaningful and supportive activity. The seniors may be involved in classroom activities, which provides a benefit of additional classroom support for teachers and students.

Club-Linked Service

Many school clubs, organizations, and teams perform service as an ongoing activity. Students sometimes receive academic credit for such service, when the specific service is tied to a learning outcome in a regular class. Student councils and sports teams organizing food drives or holiday toy collections are examples. These experiences may serve as the basis for a class composition or report.

Career/Vocational Education Course

A career/vocational education course might include apprenticeships, internships, cooperative learning experiences, work experiences, or other hands-on learning applications, in addition to learning in the classroom about the different vocations. An example is a class that has occupational skill development as a goal and includes a service dimension – such as house building, child care, or food service – in addition to classroom instruction.

In-School Service

Many programs look inside the school community, either within a single school or for a group of schools, for service activities. Cross-age tutoring, mentoring, and school improvement projects, such as playground construction and gardening activities, are examples of student service that benefit schools.

Special Events

Many schools participate in short-term projects, some seasonal or in response to a pressing need in their particular community. For example, many schools participate in an annual food drive around Thanksgiving time. Some schools have a yearly campaign, usually during the holiday season, that raises funds for a children's hospital or hospice. Many such short-term projects raise funds for charitable purposes.

Summer Service

Many forms of summer service learning opportunities exist. For example, Summer Youth Employment Programs (SYEP) and programs sponsored through the Job Training and Partnership Act (JTPA) place youth in service-related occupations and include an educational component. Park and conservation programs place youth in local, state, and national parks to do service work, which also includes educational support. Youth volunteer corps also provide educational support and service to the community during summer months. These and many other service learning opportunities exist for students in the summer.

These approaches are merely a few of the many that have been used to begin the process of integrating service learning in schools and community-based organizations. Whether it is building a school around service learning or a single teacher adopting a service activity to teach a unit, it takes time to figure out how to do it. Figuring out how to do it means getting community-based organization staff and school teachers, administrators, and counselors to use service learning as an instructional methodology, to make it part of the curriculum, and to infuse service into the life of the school and community. Critical to developing service learning is that students do not get grades for service, they get grades for what they learn. Service is only the vehicle or method to facilitate learning.

Ultimately, service should not be an extra, an elective, a special project, or a mandated requirement for graduation. It simply should be part of a good education. This goal is best captured in an eighth-grade student's comment regarding the experience of his science class rehabilitating a park. He said, "Helping to make the park better is what we do in science. It is how we learn."

Resources

The following organizations can provide useful information related to service learning.

Alliance for Service Learning in Education Reform
One Massachusetts Ave., N.W.
Suite 700
Washington, DC 20001-1431
(202) 336-7026

Arkansas Division of Volunteerism
Donaghey Plaza South
Box 1437
Little Rock, AR 72203-1437
(501) 682-7540

Campus Compact
Project for Public and Community Service
Box G, Brown University
Providence, RI 02912
(401) 863-1119

Close Up Foundation
Canal Center Plaza
Alexandria, VA 22314
(703) 706-3350

Community Service-Learning Center
Washington Blvd.
Springfield, MA 01108
(413) 734-6857

Constitutional Rights Foundation
601 South Kingsley Drive
Los Angeles, CA 90005
(213) 487-5590

Corporation for National and Community Service
Vermont Ave., N.W.
Washington, DC 20525
(202) 724-0600

Generations United
440 1st Street, N.W.
Suite 310
Washington, DC 20001-2085
(202) 638-2952

Haas Center for Public Service
Stanford University
Box 5848
Stanford, CA 94309
(415) 723-0992

Independent Sector
1828 L Street, N.W.
Washington, DC 20036
(202) 273-8100

Institute for Responsive Education
605 Commonwealth Ave.
Boston, MA 02215
(617) 353-3309

National Alliance for Youth Development
148 S. Victory Blvd.
Burbank, CA 91502
(818) 848-1993

National Dropout Prevention Center
205 Martin Street
Clemson University
Clemson, SC 29634-5111
(803) 656-2594

National Indian Youth Leadership Project
Vandenbosch Parkway
Gallup, NM 87301
(505) 722-9176

National Institute for Work and Learning
1200 18th St., N.W.
Suite 316
Washington, DC 20036
(202) 887-6800

National Service Secretariat
5140 Sherrier Place, N.W.
Washington, DC 20016
(202) 244-5828

National Society for Internships and Experiential Education
2nd Floor
124 St. Mary's Street
Raleigh, NC 27605
(919) 834-7536

National Youth Leadership Council
West County Road B
St. Paul, MN 55113-1337
(612) 631-3672

Pennsylvania Institute for
Environmental and
Community Service-Learning
Philadelphia College of Textiles
and Science
Henry Ave. and Schoolhouse
Lane
Philadelphia, PA 19144
(215) 951-0343

Points of Light Foundation
1737 H Street, N.W.
Washington, DC 20006
(202) 223-9186

Search Institute
Thresher Square West
700 S. Third St.
Suite 210
Minneapolis, MN 55415
1-800-888-7828

University of Massachusetts
Teacher Education Department
School of Education
Amherst, MA 01003
(413) 545-1339

University of Minnesota
Vocational & Technical
Education Bldg.
Buford Ave., R-290
St. Paul, MN 55108
1-800-808-7378

Youth Service America
1101 15th Street, N.W.
Suite 200
Washington, DC 20005
(202) 296-2992

Phi Delta Kappa Fastbacks

Two annual series, published each spring and fall, offer fastbacks on a wide range of educational topics. Each fastback is intended to be a focused, authoritative treatment of a topic of current interest to educators and other readers. Several hundred fastbacks have been published since the program began in 1972, many of which are still in print. Among the topics are:

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Careers
Censorship
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Legal Issues
Mainstreaming
Multiculturalism
Nutrition
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Phi Delta Kappa Educational Foundation

The Phi Delta Kappa Educational Foundation was established on 13 October 1966 with the signing, by Dr. George H. Reavis, of the irrevocable trust agreement creating the Phi Delta Kappa Educational Foundation Trust.

George H. Reavis (1883-1970) entered the education profession after graduating from Warrensburg Missouri State Teachers College in 1906 and the University of Missouri in 1911. He went on to earn an M.A. and a Ph.D. at Columbia University. Dr. Reavis served as assistant superintendent of schools in Maryland and dean of the College of Arts and Sciences and the School of Education at the University of Pittsburgh. In 1929 he was appointed director of instruction for the Ohio State Department of Education. But it was as assistant superintendent for curriculum and instruction in the Cincinnati public schools (1939-48) that he rose to national prominence.

Dr. Reavis' dream for the Educational Foundation was to make it possible for seasoned educators to write and publish the wisdom they had acquired over a lifetime of professional activity. He wanted educators and the general public to "better understand (1) the nature of the educative process and (2) the relation of education to human welfare."

The Phi Delta Kappa fastbacks were begun in 1972. These publications, along with monographs and books on a wide range of topics related to education, are the realization of that dream.